

EPA-State Workgroup - “Stormcatchers”
EPA Region 3 - Philadelphia

Geographic location or area of activity: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia

Description of activity: EPA Region 3 and its state partners formed the Stormcatchers workgroup in 2006 to assist local stormwater managers and developers who wish to encourage or require environmentally sensitive design practices to meet stormwater goals. Managing stormwater with environmentally sensitive site design techniques can help jurisdictions reduce local flooding impacts and water pollution, meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulatory requirements, and reduce construction costs as well as gain a variety of other benefits when compared to traditional stormwater management approaches.

Environmentally sensitive approaches focus on preserving natural vegetation and managing rainfall where it falls using decentralized, small-scale controls that are integrated into a site’s landscape features. These controls can include such things as rain gardens, tree boxes, green roofs, low input landscaping using native plants, porous pavement and disconnection of impervious surfaces. The objective of environmentally sensitive design is to emulate the functions of natural systems to reintegrate rainfall into the water cycle rather than disposing of it as waste.

Approach: The Stormcatchers Workgroup convened monthly for several months to formulate the message and technical information they wished to convey to developers and to municipal officials who manage stormwater. The workgroup developed a practical message to encourage more widespread application of environmentally sensitive design.



Eco Roof in Arlington Virginia

Status and Accomplishments: Stormcatchers developed a short technical support document titled “Incorporating Environmentally Sensitive Development into Municipal Stormwater Programs” to convey the workgroups message. The document includes discussions of:

- descriptions of various environmentally sensitive design features,
- environmental benefits of environmentally sensitive design,
- descriptions and cost benefits of a over half a dozen environmentally sensitive design projects around the country,
- steps that municipal officials and developers can take to ensure widespread application of these more natural stormwater management techniques, and
- links to additional resources.

The document was distributed at local and national storm water regulator conferences and sent to municipal officials and environmental organizations in order to solicit valuable input prior to finalization. The document is available on EPA's web site at <http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/municipal>. Extensive outreach will be conducted to convey the message and provide the practical technical information to a broad audience including, developers, professional organizations of scientists and engineers, municipal officials and the public using multiple media outlets.

Interagency partners: Stormcatchers Workgroup is comprised of State and EPA Region 3 Environmental Protection Agency storm water program managers from Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Local partners: National Resource Defense Council, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Schuylkill Action Network, among others have provided input.

Activity URL: <http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/municipal>